

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-3 and 6 are amended and claims 5, 7 and 8 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Specifically, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 5 and 7, and claims 2, 3 and 6 are amended to correct minor informalities. The specification is amended to correct minor informalities. No new matter is added.

I. Objection of Claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7

The Office Action objects to claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 because of informalities. Claims 1, 2 and 6 are amended to correct the informalities, responsive to the objection. Contrary to the Office Action's assertion, there are no such informalities recited in claim 4. The informalities that were associated with canceled claim 7, the subject matter of which is incorporated into claim 1, also are corrected. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the objections be withdrawn.

II. Rejections of Claims 1-8

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over L'Allier et al. (L'Allier), U.S. Patent No. 6,039,575; and rejects claims 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over L'Allier in view of Chao et al. (Chao), U.S. Patent No. 6,325,632. The §102(b) rejection and the rejection of canceled claims 5, 7 and 8 are moot. The rejections of claims 1-4 and 6 are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action acknowledges that L'Allier fails to disclose the features recited in canceled claims 5 and 7 which are incorporated into claim 1. Thus, claim 1 is patentable over L'Allier for at least this reason.

With respect to the previous rejection of claim 7, the features of which now appear in claim 1, the combination of L'Allier and Chao fails to disclose or suggest a support selection means that, when an educational support member is to be selected, selects the educational

support member who has a status in which the member can readily respond, as now recited in claim 1.

Chao discloses a computer-aided learning method and apparatus allowing a student to select an instructor from among many instructors to learn a subject through a computer (Abstract; col. 1, lines 7-10). A search engine 106 allows the student to search information regarding instructors in a storage medium 250 and to select at least one instructor to learn from (col. 2, lines 42-46). The search engine 106 automatically identifies the instructor for the student by generating the best match 252 based on instructors listed in the storage medium (col. 5, lines 17-22). After the student has selected one or more instructors, a session manager 110 establishes a session 408 between the student and the student-selected instructor (col. 5, line 66 to col. 6, line 1). However, if the instructor is not available, the session manager sends an email to the instructor to establish a later time for them to communicate (see col. 6, lines 1-4). Thus, the session manager in Chao does not select an instructor who has a status in which the instructor can readily respond. The student selects an instructor who may or may not be available. Thus, Chao fails to disclose or suggest a support selection means that, when an educational support member is to be selected, selects the educational support member who has a status in which the member can readily respond, as now recited in claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable over L'Allier and Chao, either individually or in combination.

Because claims 2-4 and 6 incorporate the features of claim 1, these claims also are patentable over L'Allier and Chao. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-4 and 6 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time

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